

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1154

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MNUC CH US
SUBJ: MORE ON THE NEUTRON BOMB FROM PEKING

REF: PEKING 1075

SUMMARY: IN TWO SIGNED ARTICLES IN PEOPLE'S DAILY OVER THE PAST WEEK, PEKING HAS POUNDED HOME ITS VIEW THAT THE US DECISION TO DEFER NEUTRON BOMB PRODUCTION WAS AN ILL-ADVISED RETREAT IN FACE OF SOVIET PRESSURE WHICH WILL WORSEN THE MILITARY BALANCE IN EUROPE. HOPES FOR SOVIET RESTRAINT, IT SAYS, ARE ILLUSORY. MEANWHILE, PRC MEDIA HAVE ALSO LOOKED AT THE PROSPECTS FOR SALT WITH A JAUNDICED EYE. END SUMMARY.

1. AFTER TWO WEEKS OF RETAILING WESTERN CRITICISM OF THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION (REFTEL), PEOPLE'S DAILY HAS DEVOTED TWO SIGNED ARTICLES TO THE SUBJECT. THE MOST RECENT, AN APRIL 24 "INTERNATIONAL NOTES" COLUMN BY SSU-MA
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TA ENTITLED "NEUTRONS, MADMEN AND SWINDLERS" (CHUNG-TZU, FENG-TZU, PIEN-TZU), CALLS THE DECISION A "CLEAR RETREAT" IN THE F KE OF SOVIET PROPAGANDA. THE ARTICLE, WHICH WAS ALSO EXCERPTED BY NCNA, ARGUES THAT THE NEUTRON BOMB WAS DESIGNED AS A "SHIELD" AGAINST THE SOVIET SUPERIORITY IN TANKS IN EUROPE. IT CHARGES SOVIET HYPOCRISY IN DENOUNCING THE NEUTRON

BOMB WHILE MAINTAINING THIS SUPERIORITY AND DEPLOYING THE MUCH MORE DESTRUCTIVE SS-20 AGAINST EUROPEAN TARGETS. SENATOR BYRD IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT REJECTION OF NEUTRON WEAPONS IN THE HOPE OF A SOVIET MATCHING RESPONSE WOULD BE NAIVE. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDES THAT SOVIET PROPAGANDA ABOUT THE BARBARITY OF NEUTRON WEAPONS IS A SWINDLE TO HIDE MOSCOW'S OWN THREAT TO WESTERN EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION, IN WHICH THE SOVIET "WAR MACHINE" WOULD "REDUCE TO ASHES" THE EIFFEL TOWER, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, THE FAMOUS PAINTINGS OF FLORENCE AND "THE CASTLE IN MUNICH."

2. AN APRIL 21 ARTICLE BY FANG MIN COVERED MUCH OF THE SAME GROUND, CHARGING AGAIN THAT THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT ON THE NEUTRON BOMB HAD BEEN MADE "UNDER SOVIET PRESSURE." FANG CONCENTRATES ON DETAILING THE CONCERN FELT IN WESTERN EUROPE ABOUT THE SOVIET DANGER, AND, BY IMPLICATION, ABOUT THE WEAKNESS OF THE AMERICAN RESPONSE. IT IS UNREALISTIC TO EXPECT THAT MOSCOW WOULD RECIPROCATATE BY ITS OWN RESTRAINT, HE SAYS. INSTEAD, RESTRICTING THE NEUTRON BOMB WILL CAUSE "PSYCHOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND MILITARY DAMAGE TO THE WEST."

3. NCNA HAS CONTINUED TO NOTE AMERICAN NEWSPAPER CRITICISM OF THE NEUTRON BOMB DECISION. IN AN NCNA ARTICLE ON APRIL 20, THE US PRESS IS QUOTED AS CONFIDENTIAL

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SAYING THAT THE KREMLIN "SENSES WEAKNESS OR INDECISION IN THE WHITE HOUSE " (WASHINGTON POST) AND "MR. CARTER APPEARS TO VACILLATE" (WALL STREET JOURNAL). PEKING'S OWN DIRECT COMMENTARY, HOWEVER, HAS SO FAR AVOIDED SUCH AD HOMINEM ATTACKS.

4. CHINESE MEDIA ALSO USED THE OCCASION OF SECRETARY VANCE'S MOSCOW TRIP TO STEP UP ITS CRITICISM OF THE SALT NEGOTIATIONS. THE APRIL 21 PEOPLE'S DAILY PUBLISHED TWO ARTICLES ON US-SOVIET RELATIONS UNDER THE HEADLINE "THE SOVIET CHALLENGE IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, WHAT WILL AMERICA DO? KISSINGER SAYS THE US MUST NOT ACCEPT SOVIET MILITARY BLACKMAIL, BUT VANCE HOPES TO SEEK WITH THE SOVIET UNION TO 'MAINTAIN WORLD STABILITY'" THE IMPLICATION OF AN AMERICAN SELLOUT ON SALT WAS STRENGTHENED BY AN APRIL 21 NCNA SUMMARY OF AN ARTICLE BY PAUL NITZE IN THE MANCHESTER UNION LEADER, IN WHICH HE ARGUES THAT SALT TWO IS LIKELY TO LEAVE THE US IN AN INFERIOR POSITION. THE FANG MIN ARTICLE (PARA 2 ABOVE) ALSO CHARGES THAT SINCE THE SALT PROCESS BEGAN IN 1969, THE SOVIET UNION CAUGHT UP TO AND IN SOME AREAS SURPASSED THE

US, AND THAT ITPRIS NOW TRYING TO COERCE THE US INTO SIGNING
A NEW AGREEMENT ON TERMS FAVORABLE TO MOSCOW.
WOODCOCK

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